

HISTORY AUDIO-DATEI

Flying to the Arctic

... mehr in der **PRINTAUSGABE:**

FEATURE Englische Artikel mit Vokabelhilfe

TECHNOLOGY Fachwissen auf Englisch

LANGUAGE Vokabel- und Grammatikübungen

WELTWEIT Interkulturelle Kommunikation

RUBRIKEN Neues aus Technik und Business

... mehr unter www.engine-magazin.de

Flying to the Arctic

Viele Forscher haben versucht, den Nordpol auf den Luftweg zu erreichen. Salomon August Andrée wagte 1897 den ersten Versuch in einem Ballon – und kehrte nie zurück.

So, who first reached the North Pole? Getting there lay on people's minds for centuries. Thomas Jefferson suggested going in a balloon. For more than a century after Jefferson, a parade of *daring* explorers tried to reach the North Pole by ship and land; and they all failed. Robert Peary and four Inuits *claimed* to have made it in 1909, but their claim has been sharply questioned. When Byrd and Bennett flew a Fokker Trimotor over the Pole in 1926, their navigation was also *contested*.

You might say Jefferson was *vindicated* when Amundsen and Ellsworth finally, and convincingly, flew over the North Pole, not in an airplane, but in the *semi-rigid*, Italian-built *dirigible* Norge. The Norge flew from Svalbard, an *archipelago* in the Arctic Ocean. It crossed the Pole and landed in Alaska.

But that was a dirigible. It could be *steered*. Much earlier, in 1897, Swedish aeronaut S. A. Andrée tried to reach the Pole in a balloon. Dirigibles were then still in their *infancy*, but unsteerable balloons were a *mature* technology.

Andrée was wonderfully confident, convincing, and wholly unrealistic. His idea of how to steer a balloon as it rode with the wind *boggles the mind*. He meant to fit his balloon with sails which, he understood, would hang *slack* as he rode with the wind.

But, he would fly low and drop a long *rope*. He rope would *drag* on the ice below and slow the balloon. Then he could *tack* against the *westerlies*, and move northward. Andrée never did manage to make the drag ropes work. During one test flight, he was blown all the way across Sweden and the *Baltic Sea* to Finland. But his blind confidence survived. He raised about a million in our dollars today from the King of Sweden, Alfred Nobel, and others. Then he set out with two companions from a base on Spitsbergen Island.

While they were still in sight of land, the drag ropes almost pulled the balloon into the sea, then *tore* loose from the gondola. They were without directional control from the start, and that was the last anyone saw of them – until 1930. Then an expedition to a small island east of Spitsbergen found their *remains* along with Andrée's journal and even undeveloped photos.

	*see list
	bumped
	equipment
	*see list
	*see list
bold	later
	lightheartedness
maintained they had	
questioned	
*see list	
*see list	
airship	
group of islands	
manoeuvred	
in an early stage	
fully developed	
*see list	
loose	
line	
trail	
*see list	
west winds	
*see list	
ripped	
bones	

They'd been blown north, lost *hydrogen*, and *bounced* to a safe landing on the ice two days later, their *gear* intact. They spent the next three months working their way south. They finally died, possibly of *trichinosis* from uncooked polar bear meat.

Through it all, Andrée kept his optimism. He'd sent a *carrier pigeon* message from the out-of-control balloon saying things were going well. His *subsequent* journal, filled with heroic good *cheer*, became a Swedish saga, reworked in books and a song-cycle. It even became an Oscar-nominated movie starring Max von Sydow as Andrée. For this tale simply had to be changed from the misguided technology it was, into heroic tragedy – which it was, as well. ■

Prof. Dr. John Lienhard, University of Houston

Dieser Text ist Teil der Radioserie „Engines of Our Ingenuity“ und wird hier mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Autors und der Radiostation KUHF wiedergegeben. Den Originaltext und weitere 2400 Kurzberichte über die Geschichte der Technik finden Sie unter www.uh.edu/engines

<i>archipelago</i>	Archipel, Inselgruppe
<i>Baltic Sea</i>	Ostsee
<i>boggle the mind, to</i>	d. Vorstellungskraft übersteigen
<i>bounce, to</i>	aufprallen, hüpfen
<i>carrier pigeon</i>	Brieftaube
<i>cheer</i>	Fröhlichkeit, gute Laune
<i>claim, to</i>	behaupten
<i>contest, to</i>	bestreiten, anfechten
<i>daring</i>	wagemutig
<i>dirigible</i>	Luftschiff
<i>drag, to</i>	schleifen, ziehen
<i>gear</i>	Ausrüstung, Klamotten
<i>hydrogen</i>	Wasserstoff
<i>infancy</i>	Anfangsphase, Kindheit
<i>mature</i>	ausgereift, erwachsen
<i>remains</i>	(sterbliche) Überreste
<i>rope</i>	Tau, Leine
<i>semi-rigid</i>	halbstarr
<i>slack</i>	lose, schlaff
<i>steer, to</i>	steuern, lenken
<i>subsequent</i>	anschließend, später
<i>tack, to</i>	hier: aufkreuzen
<i>tear, to (tore, torn)</i>	reißen
<i>trichinosis</i>	Fadenwurmerkrankung
<i>vindicate, to</i>	rehabilitieren
<i>westerlies</i>	Westwinde